

Serial No.: 09/455,102

REMARKS

The present amendment adds new claims 82-97 without the addition of new matter thereby. Presently, claims 1-33 and 35-97 are pending.

New claims 82-87 are similar to claims 36-40 and 76, which have already been found allowable, except that they recite sodium silicate instead of an alkali metal silicate. This is supported by the specification on page 2, I. 30. New claim 88 combines allowable claim 37 with the additional recitation that the silica-based material is an acidified alkali metal silicate, which is supported by the specification on page 4, II. 1-2. New claim 89 is supported by the specification on page 6, I. 16, which indicates that any order of mixing can be used.

New claims 90-95 are similar to claims 47-51 and 78, which have already been found allowable, except that they recite sodium silicate instead of an alkali metal silicate. This is supported by the specification on page 2, I. 30. New claim 96 combines allowable claim 48 with the additional recitation that the silica-based material is an acidified alkali metal silicate, which is supported by the specification on page 4, II. 1-2. New claim 97 is supported by the specification on page 6, I. 16, which indicates that any order of mixing can be used.

In accordance with the above, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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3



Serial No.: 09/455,102

MARKED VERSION OF AMENDMENTS**IN THE CLAIMS:**

The following new claims have been added to the application.

- 82. (New) A process for preparing an aqueous polysilicate microgel which comprises mixing (i) an aqueous solution of sodium silicate with (ii) an aqueous phase of silica-based material having a pH of 11 or less and (iii) an organic acid.

83. (New) The process of claim 82, wherein the organic acid is an organic polyacid.

84. (New) The process of claim 82, wherein the organic acid is a polymer containing carboxylic acid groups.

85. (New) The process of claim 84, wherein the polymer is polyacrylic acid.

86. (New) The process of claim 82, wherein the organic acid is a polymer containing sulphonic acid groups.

87. (New) The process of claim 82, wherein the aqueous polysilicate microgel prepared by the process is anionic.

88. (New) The process of claim 82, wherein the silica-based material is an acidified alkali metal silicate and the organic acid is an organic polyacid.

Serial No.: 09/455,102

89. (New) The process of claim 88, wherein the organic polyacid is added to the aqueous solution of sodium silicate, and the sodium silicate solution containing the organic polyacid is combined with the acidified alkali metal silicate.

90. (New) Aqueous polysilicate microgel obtained by mixing (i) an aqueous solution of alkali metal silicate with (ii) an aqueous phase of silica-based material having a pH of 11 or less and (iii) an organic acid.

91. (New) The aqueous polysilicate microgel of claim 90, wherein the organic acid is an organic polyacid.

92. (New) The aqueous polysilicate microgel of claim 90, wherein the organic acid is a polymer containing carboxylic acid groups.

93. (New) The aqueous polysilicate microgel of claim 92, wherein the polymer is polyacrylic acid.

94. (New) The aqueous polysilicate microgel of claim 90, wherein the organic acid is a polymer containing sulphonic acid groups.

95. (New) The aqueous polysilicate microgel of claim 90, wherein the aqueous polysilicate microgel is anionic.

96. (New) The aqueous polysilicate microgel of claim 90, wherein the silica-based material is an acidified alkali metal silicate.

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Serial No.: 09/455,102

97. (New) The aqueous polysilicate microgel of claim 96, wherein the organic polyacid is added to the aqueous solution of sodium silicate, and the sodium silicate solution containing the organic polyacid is combined with the acidified alkali metal silicate.- -

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6

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